

~~SECRET~~

NSC BRIEFING

20 February 1957

25X1

DETERIORATING POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS

- I. Polish leaders worried about future relations with USSR due to hardening Kremlin attitude.
  - A. Intensified Soviet bloc press attacks have forced Gomulka to publicly defend his "national communist" policies.
  - B. Kremlin now seeking isolate Yugoslavia and thus undercut Polish efforts maintain independence.
- II. USSR using other means force Poland return more orthodox line:
  - A. Giving covert support Stalinist faction Polish party. Successful several cases installing Stalinists local party posts.
  - B. Reportedly threatening economic sanctions, altho USSR oil and grain shipments continue. Also hampering repatriation Poles in USSR.
- III. Kremlin apparently feels compelled use all means short of military to force Poles return orthodox line dictated by USSR.
  - A. Moscow must strengthen position Polish Stalinists.
  - B. USSR plagued with internal ideological deviations stemming large part disruptive influence Gomulka program.
  - C. Soviet apparently opposing Gomulka efforts improve relations with west and seek credit there. ("Rockefeller letter" publicity on departure Polish econ mission U.S.)

DOCUMENT NO. 17  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. IS  
☒ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS 3 C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE:  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE 1-16-80 REVIEWER:

25X1

25X1

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

NSC BRIEFING

20 February 1957

**DETERIORATING POLISH-SOVIET RELATIONS**

- I. The Kremlin has stepped-up its ideological attacks against Poland with the result that Polish-Soviet relations have deteriorated now since the elections in January. The hardening Kremlin attitude has caused a new wave of pessimism among Polish leaders regarding future relations with the USSR.
  - A. The Soviet and Satellite press is condemning both Poland and Yugoslavia for their insistence on an "independent road to Socialism" and their denial of the leading role of the CPSU.
    1. The intensified attacks have now forced Gomulka, through the official Party and government press, to enter the debate in defense of his policies despite his reluctance to antagonize the USSR at this time. This has had the result of hardening the dispute.
  - B. Poland is charged with adopting national Communist policies leading to the restoration of capitalism, with disrupting the unity of the communist bloc, and with serious ideological deviations, particularly for refusing to admit that the Hungarian revolt was instigated by a capitalist plot.
  - C. Strong press condemnation of Yugoslavia with its implicit criticism of Poland as well has increased fears of Polish leaders that the Kremlin will try to isolate Yugoslavia and thereby undercut Polish attempts to maintain a position of independence.

~~SECRET~~

25X1

~~SECRET~~

1. [ ] suggest that the Kremlin intends to strike at Yugoslavia and, by this means, to force Poland into conformity with the Soviet bloc.

a) [ ] preparations for reestablishing another cominform.

b) A press report that the Kremlin has proposed a meeting of communist leaders in Prague this spring which Yugoslavia has refused to attend.

c) [ ] the Kremlin has proposed a joint declaration of communist parties against Yugoslavia condemning the "Yugoslav road to socialism." [ ]

[ ] the proposal was turned down by the Polish, Chinese and Italian communist parties.

II. The Soviets are using other means as well to force a return in Poland to a more orthodox line:

A. They are giving covert support to the Stalinist faction in the Polish party and are acting, through their ambassador in Warsaw, to install Stalinists in local party posts. This has been successful in several instances to date, and the Kremlin probably feels that the subversion of Gomulka within the party is the most promising and effective way to accomplish their aims in Poland.

B. [ ] the Kremlin has also threatened to withhold promised economic credits, and Warsaw officials [ ]

[ ] fear that the Soviets may apply even more extensive economic

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

25X1

sanctions, although there is no evidence to date that these threats, if made, have actually been carried out. Shipments of Soviet grain and petroleum continue.

- 25X1
- C. The Soviets [ ] slowed the repatriation of Poles living in the USSR. Despite their pledge of assistance to Gomulka last fall, the Soviets have obstructed efforts of the Polish repatriation commission to expedite this process.

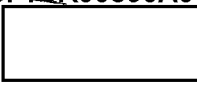
III. Gomulka's popularity continues at a high level, and with his position strengthened by the January elections, he is moving rapidly to remove Stalinists from positions in the government and he is making preparations to do the same in the party.

- A. The intensification of the Orbit press campaign against Gomulka at this time suggests that the Kremlin feels that it must act now to counteract a purge by Gomulka by strengthening the hand of Stalinists in the party.
- B. Further, Moscow is plagued with ideological deviations within the USSR and probably now feels even more strongly the need for putting a stop to the pernicious disruptive influence of Gomulka's program.
- C. Finally, the Soviets have probably become increasingly suspicious of Polish moves under Gomulka's leadership to improve relations with the West and to seek credits and assistance from that direction.
1. "Rockefeller-letter" publicity coincides with presence Ford and Rockefeller Foundation officials in Poland and with departure Polish economic mission to U.S.

~~SECRET~~

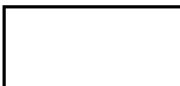
25X1

~~SECRET~~



IV. Under these circumstances, the Kremlin apparently feels compelled to use all means short of overt military intervention to force Polish leaders to return to orthodox policies dictated by the USSR. Knowing Poland's inescapable economic and political ties with the USSR, the Kremlin seems confident that these pressures will ultimately narrow rather than widen the rift with the USSR.

~~SECRET~~



13. Poland. The Polish leadership is facing serious internal problems. Although the regime has maintained the substantial degree of internal autonomy it won from the USSR last October, the initial enthusiasm it aroused has probably been restrained by the necessity to emphasize solidarity with the USSR, to accept the continued presence of Soviet troops in Poland, and to halt political reforms short of the hopes aroused in October. The popular support given the regime in the recent elections rested mainly on the widespread belief that it is the only government which can make some defense of Polish national interests and still not provoke Soviet military intervention. The regime appears to have made considerable progress in bringing the military and security organs under its effective control and in ousting many members of the pro-Soviet faction from party positions. Nevertheless, it still has far to go in rebuilding a loyal party and administrative apparatus at the local level, and there are still many middle-level and politburo-level party figures who might be willing to support Soviet efforts to undermine Gomulka's position. His recent election success, however, has placed him in a stronger position to deal with opponents within his party.

14. The regime has not been able to overcome the effects of a deteriorating economic situation, which is characterized by a decrease in exports attendant on a decline in coal production, difficulties in collecting food from the peasants, and a partial industrial disorganization resulting from the weakening of central authority and the spontaneous establishment of workers' councils. Thus the regime has been faced with a weakened economy at a time when it is pledged to gratify long-contained popular desires for better standards of living.